The Mysterious Monogram

By Howard P. Rockey Copyright 1914 Howard P. Rocke

ly about the circle. "It is possible slender, effeminate form of the Prince surface of the man. that Captain Towneshend may have and the men about the table admirbeen killed by one of our members- ingly compared his tremendous even by someone who now sits about strength and vigor with the slight this board."

All eyes were turned upon him and an air of nervous expectancy came join us in a proceeding which Lord strong evidence that seemed to point over the group.

"If we do our full duty," Harcourt continued, "we cannot stop when we have merely questioned the servants of the club and have given our pledge that they shall be here as well as we when the police may so desire. What right have we to stand by and say to the police 'discover the man.' Gentlemen, we are all well known to each other, and I think you will not misunderstand what I am about to say."

He paused, and taking a cigarette from his case, reached deliberately for a match.

"Go on," someone said in annoyance.

"All of you in this room were my guests at dinner last evening. The others were Mr. Henry Cornish, an Marston, and Prince Kirshin Kandmy dinner."

"Was Towneshend in Madras when you served there, Sir Thomas?" Farn- implied question, 'are you guilty of dale asked quickly.

"No. He did not go out until after my retirement." Sir Thomas answer-

ed. "Why?" "I was wondering if you knew the

"One moment, please," cautioned the Duke sternly. "We are not here to jump at conclusions nor to investigate strangers who were with us. What is your suggestion, Lord Harcourt ?"

"If-as seems extremely probable -the murder was committed by a member of this club, that member is unquestionably one of those who attended my dinner last evening," said Harcourt. "I would suggest, therefore, that Prince Kandwahr and Mr. Cornish, who are both downstairs now, be asked to come into the room with us, and that you sir, put flatly to each of us upon our honor as gentlemen, the question of our individual innocence or guilt."

A murmur of protest greeted the conclusion of his sentence, and for a brief moment the Duke looked at him in astonishment. "You mean then, Harcourt, that you have reason to suspect one of us of this thing?" he demanded.

"I do." The answer came with quiet conviction, more startling than his suggestion had been

"Good Lord, Jack!" Marston exclaimed. "What on earth-"

"I do not think my suggestion unreasonable, gentlemen," Harcourt protested. "If innocent, no one of us can object to declaring the fact openly upon his honor, before us all. I am willing to be asked and to answer such a question myself, and I earnestly urge all of you to do likewise."

"But why-" Farndale began, only to be silenced by a gesture from Harcourt.

"It has been stated that I was the last man seen with Captain Towneshend," he explained. "This being true, a certain amount of suspicion naturally points to me. If I do not hesitate to answer such a question under these circumstances, why should you decline to do so? Your Grace, I ask that this be done, and I shall feel much relieved if the board will consent to it."

"Since you feel that way about it, I will submit your suggestion if you make it as a motion," said the Duke.

Harcourt nodded and the vote was called. There was a moment's hesitancy when the ayes were called for. Then twelve men gave their consent, and a servant was instructed to request the attendance of Kandwahr and Cornish.

When the man had gone, Harcourt lit his cigarette, and staring at the ceiling, smoked in silence. There was an awkward lull in the conversation and now and then someone shifted nervously in his seat. Again the ticking of the great clock sounded through the room. Several of the Governors looked at their watches consciously and compared them with it. A little whirring noise, followed by a sharp click and the chimes struck the quarter hour before two. A little start ran through the company. Just about twelve hours before, Captain Towneshend had died in the room above them.

the door open as a servant brought in dous. He was intensely popular Cocoanut reef." 'Merciful powers!' Cornish and Kandwahr and then re- among the men who had heard his the doctor cried. 'And I told you un-

build of the Indian.

Then he told them briefly what they sibly have killed Towneshend. had decided to do, requesting their our number should-should make a that he could be the guilty man. statement other than we confidently expect, it will remain for him and not | Sir Harry Farndale demanded. for us to repeat that statement in another place."

Slowly he arose and pushed back his chair. "I will begin by saying to American acquaintance of Sir Thomas you that I left the club shortly after midnight, and went from here to the wahr, a guest of this club, introduced, House which was then in session. I I believe by Captain Towneshend, at did not kill Captain Towneshend. To whose request I invited the Prince to each of you in turn, I shall speak by name, and you will please answer me by saying simply 'yes' or 'no' to the the death of Captain Towneshend?""

Turning to Sir Henry Farndale at right, the Duke spoke his name.

"No!" said Farndale, very clearly and distinctly.

Then passing rapidly from one to the other, he called upon each in turn, and, amid a strained silence, their answers came negatively. That none of them relished the ordeal was most apparent. One by one, those about about it." the table spoke as their names were a tone that seemed to him far away and faint.

"Col. Trevan?" asked the Duke. "God bless me, no!" exclaimed the old gentleman, and he mopped his blushing face furiously with his hand-

There was a momentary smile at his embarrassment, and at the mental strain of the affair had told upon him, picture they formed of the feeble old man attempting to commit any act of

"Prince Kandwahr?"

The silence seemed deeper and the | Harcourt's fiancee. men who had been staring straight before them, turned involuntarily to look at the stranger in their midst. Harcourt, leaning back carelessly in his chair, glanced keenly at the Indian as he stood up, faced the Duke, and seemingly unconscious of the attention he attracted, in a firm quiet tone, answered "No."

Cornish's deep voice responded next, then Marston's.

The hush was deeper and more oppressive, and there was a faint smile on the Duke's face as he turned to Harcourt. It was he who had requested the questioning and now only he remained to answer.

"Lord Harcourt?" said the Duke. Straightening up in his chair, Harcourt leaned forward upon the table. Quietly he looked about the little the stuff in me." group and his eyes met those of each man there. "Gentlemen," he said. "I don't know!"

There was a murmur of astonishment and several men sprang to their feet. The Duke stared at him in engagement hadn't been announced. amazement, and Marston, stepping The whole business is bad enough in forward quickly, placed his hand upon any event, but it is a crime that Harcourt's shoulder.

ize what you're saying man? You it." -you don't know?"

"I am perfectly aware of what I am saying and what you must think of me," Harcourt replied, facing them recollection whatever as to what happened. It is because of these facts her." that I have asked you to submit to the questioning just finished. I thank you for having done so. I do not think I could have done such a thing under any circumstances. George Towneshend was closer to me than most men, and I had no quarrel with him-and yet-in view of all the circumstances, I am obliged to say to you that I do not know. I may havekilled him!"

CHAPTER III.

The Monogram Appears.

The stir that followed Harcourt's With a feeling of relief they saw amazing announcement was tremen- aire whose yacht was wrecked on "I believe you wished to see us, his affectations and foppish manner- rich. George, get the saws and axes. gentlemen," said Cornish. His great, isms, all of them admired the sterling We must operate at once."

"This," said Harcourt, looking slow- sturdy frame almost obscured the qualities that lay behind the artificial

Harcourt's popularity was not that of wealth or position. He was regarded with genuine affection by everyone who had opportunity to "We have sent to ask that you will know him well, and, in spite of the Harcourt has suggested," the Duke to his guilt, not one of them for a moment suspected that he could pos-

· Excitedly they gathered about him, consent to the plan. "Of course," he each seeking for some explanation of concluded, "whatever may now be said the strange declaration that had 'n this room is between gentlemen, fallen among them like a thunderbolt. and it is understood between us that It was, of course, known that he had nothing which takes place here shall been the last man seen in the room be repeated or even remembered out- with the murdered man, and the fact side. I cannot say that I favor this that he was not then himself was genproceeding, as it seems to me to be erally known, yet they found it quite useless; but if, by chance, any one of impossible to believe for a moment

"Jack, are you dreaming or drunk?"

"Neither, Harry," said Harcourt. 'I'm merely paying the penalty of indulging in the great family weakness. As you know, the Harcourts have all been too fond of liquor, and centuries of overindulgence have had their effect on me."

"I don't understand."

"I simply mean that I'm afraid liquor has made me disgrace the fam-

"Lord Harcourt, you are nervousupset," said the Duke, kindly. "You surely do not realize what you are saying, and cannot mean it if you do. advise you to go home and rest for the remainder of the day. The thing soring farrow A. A. Wood & Son, Saline is bound to clear itself up before is bound to clear itself up before

"I hope so," said Harcourt earnestly. "I only wish I could feel sanguine

"Just a moment, gentlemen," said spoken, some with a quick, nervous the duke warningly, "Please remem-No!"-others in an almost impercep- ber our agreement not to repeat anytible whisper. Still another spoke in thing that has been said in this room or to comment upon what took place here. We are all understood on the subject?"

There was a murmur in the affirmative, and the little throng began to issue from the room. Sir Thomas Marston was at Harcourt's side. The old soldier was pale and haggard. The not only because of his regard for his prospective son-in-law, but because of the effect the whole occurrence would be bound to have upon his daughter-

"Will you come home with me now?" he asked, slipping his arm through Harcourt's. "Grace is very anxious to see you."

"Not yet," Harcourt answered slowly. "Come upstairs with me, I want to have a little talk with you before I go to her. I promised to come at 5 if I could arrange it."

Leaving the others the two men ascended the stairs and entered a deserted card room. Marston closed the door and touched the electric button in the wall.

"Try a drink, Jack. It will brace you up," the major advised.

Harcourt shook his head. "Not now," he said. "I want to think clearly-and I never can when I get

"Well I'm for a big one," Sir Thomas announced. "This thing has me all

"I don't wonder," Harcourt said. "I'd give anything in the world if my Grace's name should be bauled "Jack!" he exclaimed, "Do you real- through the papers in connection with

"Don't think of that side of it, Jack," said Sir Thomas, "It is unpleasant, naturally, and it will be a great strain for her to bear, but it all calmly. "As you know, I was not does not affect our regard for you in entirely myself last night. I have no any way, and if she were your wife now it would be all the harder for

(To be continued)

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"These are evil days for the rich men," said George Ade at a luncheon at the Chicago Athletic club. "I'd rather be a pick-pocket than an interlocking director-there's more honor in it. They say that a canhibal king recently sent posthaste for his doctor. "Good gracious, man!" the doctor said. "You're in a dreadful state: what have you been eating?" "Nothing," groaned the sick man, "except a slice of that multimillionstatement, and, while they laughed at |der no circumstances to eat anything BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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